

FLU SEASON – SOME FACTS & TIPS TO HELP YOU AVOID CATCHING THE VIRUS

The United States experiences epidemics of seasonal flu each year. This time of year is called “flu season.” In the United States, while seasonal influenza (flu) viruses are detected year-round, flu viruses are most common during the fall and winter months. The exact timing can vary, but influenza activity often begins to increase in October and November. Most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February and can last as late as May.

Take time to get a flu vaccine.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Getting a flu vaccine during 2021-2022 will be most important than ever. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. The more people who get vaccinated, the more people will be protected from flu, including older people, very young children, pregnant women, and people with certain long-term health conditions who are more vulnerable to serious flu complications.
- Flu vaccines are not designed to protect against COVID-19, but they will reduce the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths on the health care system and conserve scarce medical resources for the care of people with COVID-19.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get annual flu vaccine.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older. Many people at higher risk from flu also seems to be at higher risk from COVID-19.

You should get a flu vaccine before flu begins spreading in your community. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against flu, so make plans to get vaccinated early in fall, before flu season begins. CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October, if possible. Getting vaccinated later, however, can still be beneficial and vaccination should continue to be offered throughout the flu season, even into January or later.

For more information, go to the Centers for Disease Control website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/index.html>

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